PRAYERS

FOR THE USE OF

SUNDAY SCHOOL

SUPERINTENDENTS

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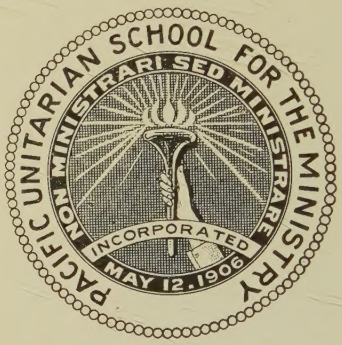

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PRAYERS FOR THE USE OF SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

PRAYERS

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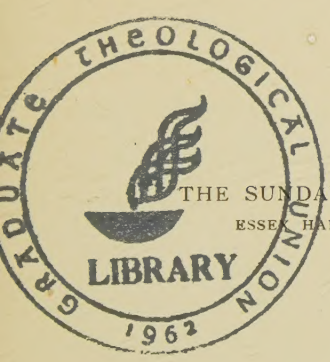

London
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1900

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PREFACE.

THIS collection of Prayers for the use of Sunday School Superintendents has been prepared by the Committee of the Sunday School Association in response to requests for such a work which have reached them from many quarters.

Most of the prayers have been selected from those which have already appeared in volumes of *The Sunday School Helper* and *The Helper*, or from other sources; but some have been specially written for this book.

ESSEX HALL, LONDON,
December, 1900.

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Prayers for Opening School.

I.

GOD, our Father, we are come together in gladness and thankfulness, to ask thy blessing. Help us to be true to what we know. Help us to live as thy children at home, at work, and at play. May we show our love and thankfulness to thee by helping others, by speaking the truth, and by being kind and unselfish. So may we grow to be true followers of Jesus Christ. Amen.

II.

ORD of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things, pour into our hearts, we beseech thee, the love of thy name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same.

Amen.

III.

GOD, our Father, who art with us here, and seest us as we kneel before thee, help us to lift up our hearts in thankfulness to thee for all thy care and the countless blessings which we owe to thy love. We thank thee for watching over us during the hours of darkness, and keeping us while we slept. We thank thee too for waking us up to the duties and happiness of another day. Father, grant that we may be kept from doing wrong this day, and may learn better and better how to please thee, and how to love and thank thee more. We are thy children, and we would become more like thy son Jesus Christ, who always did thy will. Help us to learn more about him, and to remember what we learn; so that this day which thou hast given us may not have been spent in vain. Keep us, O God, from idle words, and unkind actions. Fill us with a spirit of reverence and obedience and love; and may we remember

that we spend every hour of our lives in thy sight, and under thy protecting care. Amen.

IV.

THOU who art the Father of all the families of the earth, and the ever present help of them that put their trust in thee; as we call ourselves the disciples of Christ, may the light of his teaching and life shine into our souls, dispel the darkness of ignorance, comfort us in our sorrows, and direct our steps in the way of peace and safety. Give us, we pray thee, thoughtful and sober minds, that we may seek to know and do thy will. Take from us all selfish desires, all unhallowed thoughts; and make us pure and holy, full of gentleness and mercy, meekness and humility. In all the difficulties and trials of life, may our hearts be fixed on thee, and may our daily actions be done in thy service and to thy glory. Amen.

V.

GOD, our Father, we come together in gladness and thankfulness, to ask thy blessing. Thou makest the world beautiful, and thy voice in our hearts teaches us what is right and true. Help us to be more truly thy children, to be more gentle and kind and patient, to be more like Jesus, to love what is lovely and pure and good, to be glad to learn, and to help one another. Keep us all from what is evil. Help us to live as children of thy kingdom. Amen.

VI.

HOLY Father, we thank thee for this day to which thou hast awakened us, and we pray that, as it passes, we may continually remember that it is given us by thee. Take from us all pleasure in sin, all evil passions and inclinations, all selfish desires, all unclean and unhallowed thoughts, and make us pure and holy, full of love and gentleness,

meekness and humility, earnestness and devotion. Grant that our hearts may be fixed on thee, and that all our daily labours, and lowliest actions may be done in thy service and to thy glory. Amen.

VII.

TEACH us, O God, to lay to heart the works of thy hands around us. Teach us to ponder how from a little seed sown in good ground spring forth the flowers in their beauty and their sweetness and their multitude, the trees of the forest in their majesty and their strength. Teach us to labour without ceasing in our own hearts, that the seed sown therein by thy bountiful hand, being neither choked by the cares of the world, nor caught away by the spirit of evil, but taking root and standing fast against all foes, may grow and flourish and bear fruit a hundred fold, to the good of our brethren, and to the praise of thy ever glorious name. Amen.

VIII.

ATHER in heaven, we ask thee to aid us in the battle of life; inspire us with a zeal for righteousness; rouse us from a dreamy hope of future bliss, and awaken us to the needs and the duties of to-day. Fill us with a yearning to be up and doing, fighting against wrong, planting the seeds of goodness, so that we may reap the harvest of faith in the ultimate triumph of thy will. Strengthen us in our determination to bear the burdens of those who are weak; bear us up in our struggles against sin; refresh us when we faint; enliven our weariness. May our every thought inspire us to right action and our every action help others, as well as ourselves, along the path which leads to thee. Amen.

IX.

GOD our Father, we trust thee and love thee for all the goodness with which thou hast filled our lives. For home and school,

for parents and friends and teachers, for wise words and pleasant hours we give thanks to thee. Let thy spirit be with us now. Help us to be thoughtful and attentive. Open our hearts to all good influences. Keep us from wrong and sin. And lead us into the ways of goodness and truth. We ask it for thy mercy's sake. Amen.

X.

ETERNAL GOD, if in the past we have been blind to our own faults and quick to mark those of our brethren, if we have seen the mote in our neighbour's eye and not plucked the beam out of our own, we know thou wilt deal with us not only as our Judge, but as our merciful and forgiving Father. Open the eyes of our understanding, soften our hearts, O God, and lead us by the voice of thy heavenly love to do unto others as we would that others should do unto us, and so may we grow daily in fitness for thy everlasting kingdom. Amen.

XI.

LMIGHTY Lord, we lift our hearts to thee in thankfulness for all the glory of the world in which we live. Help us to look beyond all that we see, to thee, who art the Giver of all good things. May the light which shines from heaven upon this changing world, put into our minds the thought of the eternal light in which thou dwellest, the light whither each of us will in time be called to dwell with thee. In the days of earthly strength and gladness may our spirits glow with love to our Heavenly Father, and may we follow in the steps of him who went about doing good. Hear us, we pray thee, O Father. Amen.

XII.

GOD, we thank thee for this morning hour, how beautiful it is to be alive! Help us to-day to set our minds on learning something. Help us at all times to set our hearts on being good. Amen.

XIII.

EAVENLY Father, we meet together in thy name to sing thy praises, and to learn to tread the path of duty marked out for all thy children. Too often, like wandering sheep, we stray far from our Shepherd's care, and are heedless of our Father's love. But thou, O God, with gentle hands dost lead us back, stilling our fears and wiping all tears from our eyes. Grant, O Father, that feeling our weakness, we may early learn to seek strength from thee, so that we may be saved from evil and be able to resist temptation. We ask thee to forgive us all our past sins, and to help us to lead holier and purer lives hereafter. May our meeting here to-day not be in vain. Let thy blessing rest upon the teacher and the taught. Unite us all in one bond of love, feeling that we are children of one Father in Heaven, disciples of one Master, Christ Jesus. Amen.

XIV.

THOU who art the giver of every perfect gift, we thank thee for the constant order of thy providence, which brings round the seasons in their turns; and also for the love which draws us to each other and to thee. We bless thee for sending Jesus Christ to show us thy goodness, and to teach us that thou art our Father, and that amid all thy countless works, thou dost never forget even the least of thy children. And we pray that in thinking and reading of his holy life, of his readiness to serve others, and of his perfect obedience to thy will, we may gain some likeness to him, so that our lives may become more gentle, pure, and true, and we may be less unworthy of all thy love and care. Hear us, O Father, for thy mercy's sake, and lead us, day by day, in the paths of truth and goodness.

Amen.

Prayers for Closing School.

I.

THOU who inhabitest eternity, and whose ear is always open to the prayer of thy children, may we labour to adorn our minds with wisdom, to fill our hearts with kind and good affections, and to make truth and duty the guiding principles of our thoughts and actions. Enlighten in us what is dark, raise and purify what is low, support and strengthen in us what is feeble and weak. Save us from vanity, folly, and vice. Save us from false and dangerous pursuits, and feed us with knowledge and virtue, with piety, peace, and happiness. As our Creator, we would revere thee. As our Father, we would love thee. To thee, O God, may we always turn in every time of trouble, as our truest and best friend, and to thee be given blessing and praise for ever. Amen.

II.

LORD our God, help us to love our school more and more. For all the good we have gained in it, make us truly thankful. The instruction it offers us, enable us to heed wisely. The pleasures it affords us, may we use and not abuse. When far away from our school, may we still remember that we belong to it: and in all we say or do may we never bring shame upon it or upon ourselves. Amen.

III.

UR Heavenly Father, our Shepherd and our King! we are gathered here to-day to thank thee for all the blessings that thou hast showered upon us, and to seek strength to do thy will in the work to which thou callest us. Father, we thank thee for our homes; bless all who love us and all whom we love. Help each one of us, we pray thee, to remember that the happiness of

home is largely in our own keeping; help us to set a watch upon our lips, so that the hasty word may not be spoken, and so to guard our thoughts that unkindness may find no entrance into our hearts. May the blessing of thy love rest upon this, our school; may we strive to learn more and more of thy will so that we may follow thee in our daily life as the sheep follow the good shepherd. We thank thee for all the good men and women who have taught us by their example the beauty of a pure and noble life, and especially for Jesus, our Great Teacher, who showed us how helpful and how strong is he who trusteth in thee. May we strive to go about doing good even as he did; and may we learn to trust thee with a perfect love; for then, like him, we shall look upon our joys and sorrows as thy messengers, and shall learn to accept thankfully and bear patiently whatever thou shalt send. Amen.

IV.

GOD, we ask thy aid to enable us to live as thy children; we pray thee to help us to bring our wills into harmony with thine. May we fulfil the tasks thou givest us to perform, that they may be to us a means of rising nearer and nearer to thee. Help us to obey the voice of conscience, and to recognise in it thy voice speaking to us, and warning us when we are going astray from thy path. May we never deaden that voice so that its tones are no longer heard. Fill us with the wisdom that will enable us to see what is right and what is wrong; and when on one side there is placed the temptation to do what is pleasant and easy but wrong, and on the other the duty to do what is irksome, help us to decide for the right. When there comes to us a choice between a higher and a lower, give us the courage to choose the higher and the strength to follow it. It is by striving, toiling, and

suffering that we come to what is highest and best. It is so that we come to know thee. May we attain to such knowledge; and having attained it, may we use it in thy service. Amen.

V.

GOD, who hast called us to follow that which is good, and flee from that which is evil, thou knowest how often, day after day, we have weakly yielded to the temptations on our path and left our work undone. O God, whose voice of warning and of love we have so little heeded, call us yet again, we beseech thee, that we may answer thee and do thy bidding; call us that we may stray from thee no more and that, looking towards heaven, we may fulfil our days on earth as children worthy of their high calling and ever at peace with thee. Amen.

VI.

ATHER in heaven, the giver of all good things, we thank thee for these hymns we sing, these books we read, and for the school to which we belong. Bless, we pray thee, whatever we have learned or taught to-day. And may thy blessing abide upon our teachers and companions, our parents, brothers, and sisters, and all for whom we ought to pray, to-day and evermore. Amen.

VII.

E a father and a friend to us each day, we pray from our inmost souls. Morning, noon, and evening may our hearts be in thy keeping. Set a guard upon our lips, that by no word we may wound any one of those with whom we have to do. Put a bridle on our tempers, and teach us to remember that victory over ourselves is blessed in thy sight. Keep us from evil speaking, from selfishness and from untruthfulness. Teach us to

judge ourselves with honesty and fearlessness, and to be slow to judge our brethren. In all things may we be inspired and ruled by the law of love, and so be brought ever nearer to thy kingdom. Amen.

VIII.

GOD, give us, we beseech thee, the spirit of wisdom and of love. May we be faithful and diligent in the work which thou hast given us to do, and mindful, amidst all our earthly occupations, of another and a better world. May we put away from us all hatred and strife; and, so far as in us lies, may we live peaceably with all men. Help us to serve each other in love, bearing one another's burdens, assisting one another's temporal and spiritual welfare, exercising mutual sympathy and mutual forbearance. May love reign in our hearts, and peace in our dwellings, and mayest thou, the God of love and peace, be ever with us. Amen.

IX.

GOD our Father, we hush our voices and our spirits, and wait for thee to speak to us. We have listened too much to the noises of the busy world, and have not had an inner silence in which we could hear thy still small voice; we have thought thee far away when thou wast beside us always, and it was our own blindness that hid thee from us.

We beseech thee help us each to begin afresh; let us turn to thee more earnestly, and try to live a holy life. We need thy help to bear even our *little* trials, and to do even our little daily duties. Let us look up to thee, and thou wilt bear us through, and then we shall be brave and true and loving. Amen.

X

GOD of our life, thou who art our ever present friend and helper, we thank thee for all the opportunities we have of learning more about thee, and our duty in our work on earth. As we go now to our homes, may we indeed know and feel that thou art very near to us, although we see thee not. May we try always to do thy holy will, and so to trust in thee as in thy strength to be safe amid all temptations. Forgive us all that we have done amiss, O Lord. Keep us, and help us to keep ourselves free from every stain of sin, and from all careless, unkind or wicked thoughts, words, and deeds. May we return to our every day work in the world with our hearts and wills more truly given to thy service. Amen.

The New Year.

ALMIGHTY and Eternal God, Father of all mankind, we bless thee for the love and care with which thou hast watched over us in the past; keep us, we beseech thee, in the future. Thou art ever with us, and yet too often are we careless of the duties thou hast entrusted to us, thoughtless amid the pleasures thou givest us, slow to seek thee even in the hour of temptation, trial, or sorrow, when we most need thee.

Keep us, we pray thee, in the coming year more truly thine. Help us faithfully to perform all our duties, strengthen us against every temptation to evil, and lead us in the paths of righteousness. Fill our hearts with that perfect love which casteth out fear, so that we may go forward in faith, trusting in thee, and knowing that thou, the Eternal, art ever with us, and in thee is our strength and joy and peace. Amen.

The Close of the Year.

GOD of the ages, unto whom a thousand years are as a single day, the past and the future are thine. We remember with sorrow the wrong we have done and the duties we have neglected in the year that draws to a close. Forgive us we pray thee, and help us to seek the forgiveness of any whom we have wronged, and make us quick to forgive one another. So may we leave all evil of the past behind.

We give thee thanks for all that we have learned in the past year, and any good we may have done; and for all its precious memories and holy influences. Grant that we may bear them with us as we go forward. And grant unto us above all to feel that thou thyself art ever with us, and that thou art our Father and we thy children, now and for ever. Amen.

Christmas.

THOU who art the Father of all the families of the earth, the guardian of helpless infancy, the guide and protector of childhood and youth, the comfort and strength of the aged, we praise thee for all sweet and good influences which unite thy children in the bonds of pure and holy love.

We give thee thanks for this season of peace and love consecrated to the memory of the birth and childhood of Jesus, and endeared to each one of us by many tender associations and happy memories, and innocent joys. O let thy blessing rest upon us, on our school and on our homes, at this time.

Grant that all our social gatherings may be such as are good and healthy for body and mind. And in every

family gathering may the spirit of holiness and love be in the home.

May we remember that he whose birth we now celebrate, as a child was obedient to his parents, and as a man was obedient to thee and to thine eternal laws of righteousness, living not for himself alone, but for his fellow-men.

Grant that we also, in all humility and simplicity of heart, may live not for ourselves, but for one another, always rejoicing to share with others whatsoever good things thou dost graciously give unto us. May this be unto each one of us a season of kindness, peace and love, of holiness and joy; and so may thy blessing rest upon us thy children. Amen.

Easter.

THOU who orderest the course of the world and the changing seasons of the year, who givest seed time and harvest, summer and winter, who makest the glory of day and the solemn silence and peace of night, we thank thee for the renewed life of earth at this season, for the springs that flow again after the winter's frost and snow, for the budding leaves and flowers, for the plants long buried in the ground that spring up anew to beautify the face of the earth, for the music of the birds, and the glory of brighter and warmer days and clearer skies.

We thank thee with more earnest and solemn gratitude for him whose noble work, and holy teaching, whose faithful death and whose eternal life, we celebrate at this Eastertide.

Grant that the holy influence which he spread around him and which

still lives in the world, may enter into our hearts and lives. Lighten our darkness, rouse us from sloth and idleness, raise us from sin and ignorance into the knowledge and love of righteousness, in which alone is our true life. When we are tempted to withhold our offerings of self-denial and sacrifice, make us mindful of the greatest of all sacrifices, and the absolute self-denial of Jesus. When we are timid and doubtful give us his courage and confidence in thee. When our way is dark, make the light of the truth to shine upon us, as it shone in him. Grant unto us also the victory over sin and death, and bring us by thy saving power into the glory and peace and joy of eternal life. Amen.

A School Anniversary.

THOU who givest life to all who live, and impartest wisdom to those who sincerely desire it and diligently seek after it, we thank thee for the life which thou hast given unto us, and the measure of knowledge and wisdom which thou hast granted to us.

We thank thee for our school in which we have opportunities of meeting together, and helping and encouraging one another in all those things which make for righteousness and a clearer understanding of the true meaning of life, and a better knowledge of the world in which we live, and all its beauty and mystery.

We beseech thee, let thy blessing rest upon this place for the sake of the work that is done here week by week and year by year. May those who teach be inspired by the spirit of wisdom and holiness and

love, humble in the thought of the limitations of their knowledge and the greatness of their task, yet ever hopeful to see the fruit of good seed sown in the hearts of those who desire to learn. And deepen, we pray thee, the trust of all in thee, so that if for a time hope should fail, yet faith may still wait patiently for thee.

Help those who learn, to be thoughtful, earnest, attentive, helpful one to another, and by their diligence, order and obedience making their school a home of peace and wisdom.

Help us to be worthy successors of those who have laboured here in the years that are past, and to leave the fruit of good and faithful work to those who come after us.

Unite us all in the bonds of faithful fellowship, that we may work together for the spread of thy kingdom of truth and righteousness, and receive the rich reward of thy blessing. Amen.

In Times of Sickness.

GOD, in whom we live and move and have our being, our joys and sorrows, our strength and weakness, our life and death are in thy hands.

We offer to thee our prayer for those dear friends and companions who are unable to be now present with us by reason of sickness. Be thou their support in the time of affliction and weakness, and if it be thy will restore them to health and strength.

Comfort those who watch with anxiety by the sick bed, that they may know that neither health nor sickness, life nor death, can separate them from those whom they love, nor from thee the all-loving Father.

Grant unto us the mutual love and sympathy which can lighten every sorrow, and that peace which the world can neither give nor take away, but which dwells for ever in the hearts of those who truly love thee. Amen.

The Death of a Teacher.

THOU who hast created all things that are, who measurest out our life and appointest the time of death, as we meet together we are mindful of one who laboured in our midst and whom we shall see amongst us no more. We have lost a friend and fellow-labourer in our school, and the shadow of deep sorrow rests upon one of our homes.

Unto thee, the eternal God and Father of all, we look for comfort. Let thy peace rest upon the home that is afflicted by loss and sorrow. In the hearts of those who now mourn revive the tender and precious memories of the past, and dispel the shadow of sorrow by the light of hope and faith. Reveal unto our hearts the deep and holy mystery of the life eternal, in which death hath no part; and grant unto us truly to live unto thee now and for ever. Amen.

The Death of a Scholar.

THOU who strengthenest the weak and comfortest those who mourn, we pray for our friends who now are afflicted with sorrow for the loss of their dear child, our former companion in our school. Grant that their grief may draw them more closely unto thee, and that coming to thee they may find that in thee is eternal life. So may the cloud of sorrow be dispelled by the light of thy presence, and every doubt and fear be banished, and faith reign supreme in their hearts. And grant that each one of us may so live, that when we are called hence we may be found worthy of our eternal home with thee. Amen.

Benedictions.

I.

MAY the love of God abide in our hearts and rule our lives through all the coming week. Amen.

II.

DEAR Father, we thank thee for all thy loving care, and we ask thee to help us, as long as we live, to be thy true and loving children. Amen.

III.

MAY the spirit that was in Jesus, the spirit of truth and the spirit of love, abide in our hearts and hallow our daily lives. Amen.

IV.

NOW may the blessing of God be upon us. May his truth direct us and his love sustain us, now and for evermore. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer.

UR Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

CLOSING VERSE.

(*May be said or sung by all.*)

Tune No. 52, Part II., 'Essex Hall Hymn and Tune Book.'

HEAVENLY Father, lead us on
In the way of truth begun:
Let the light of love divine
All along our pathway shine.
Heavenly Father, lead us on
By the way of duty done,—
Day by day, and hour by hour,
Onward, upward, evermore.

Amen.

THE END.

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